



## Climate diplomacy: Understanding national policies and drivers

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*IIED's Climate Change Group has been providing support to the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group at the UNFCCC since 2001. They are currently working with in-country LDC experts to understand the existing infrastructures for undertaking climate diplomacy, and to identify policy recommendations for furthering this work. Mr. Gebru Jember Endalew of Ethiopia, an LDC group core team member, has produced three research papers as material for a forthcoming IIED Briefing. Recognising that effective climate diplomacy must be firmly rooted within the national interest, the three research papers look at: **Understanding national engagement; Understanding national policies and drivers; and Drawing conclusions and recommendations.** In this second paper, on understanding national policies and drivers, the research looks at what policies link national and global climate change concerns, and what are the main drivers for the creation and implementation of climate change policies.*

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## Introduction

Ethiopia regularly experiences the adverse impacts of greater climate variability and change, and has now established a number of policies and strategies to minimize impacts and address the challenges. Environmental impacts of climate change have no boundaries however, and whatever is done at the national level is still affected by actions happening globally. In recent decades efforts undertaken by the Government of Ethiopia to overcome climate shocks have become more challenging. In order to be able to sustain the development efforts that the country is undertaking, and continue to absorb the many climate related disasters, the Government of Ethiopia's priority is to address climate change issues at both national and global levels. This research paper outlines the national policies and strategies that currently exist in Ethiopia that have a link to global climate change concerns, as well as discussing the main drivers that exist for the creation and implementation of climate change policies in Ethiopia.

As outlined in Paper one, Ethiopia started undertaking climate diplomacy in 2009, with the then Prime Minister Meles Zenawi actively engaged in different *fora* at both national and international levels. Ethiopia's engagement contributed significantly to the establishment of the *Conference of African Heads of State on Climate Change* (CAHOSCC), which has served as the political wing of African climate change negotiators up until now. The Ethiopian government has continued to identify climate change as high priority, publishing the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE) strategy in 2011 and mainstreaming it into the Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) for 2016-2020.

## Policies and strategies that link national and global climate concerns

Prior to the development of the Climate Resilient Green Economy strategy, Ethiopia had been developing sectoral and national strategies and plans without necessarily considering climate change and variability within them. There were however a large number of sectoral and cross sectoral policies including: the environmental policy<sup>i</sup>, forestry policy, energy policy, conservation strategy, sustainable Land Management System, Productive Safety Net Program, removal of fuel subsidies initiatives etc., which were directly or indirectly addressing climate variability and change in their own ways.

Until 2009 the National Meteorological Agency (NMA) was the UNFCCC focal point and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was the focal point for the Kyoto protocol. The overall coordinating entity for climate change issues in Ethiopia has now grown from the EPA into the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. After COP15 the government decided the UNFCCC focal point would also be the EPA, with the EPA becoming the overall coordinating agency. The climate agenda however is sector wide, and it soon became clear there was a need to have an entity that could coordinate all sectors, and which would need to have ministerial status. Hence the government decided to establish the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF) in order to reflect the focus given to the climate change agenda at the national level. The ministry was changed to the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change (MEFCC) last year. The CRGE sector ministries now also have CRGE units that will follow climate change related issues on a regular basis.

Interventions prepared by Ethiopia to respond to global needs and national requirements have been in place for many years, including: ratification of the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol; submission of national communications;<sup>ii</sup> development of the National Adaptation Programme of Action;<sup>iii</sup> and preparation of the NAMA<sup>iv</sup>. An ambitious Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) was also prepared and communicated in time for COP21.<sup>v</sup> Linking these communications with national development needs has occurred through: the development of the CRGE and associated sectoral Climate Resilient strategies; the establishment of the CRGE Facility; and the integration of the CRGE into GTP II. Further details on these interventions are given below.

## National development plans

Ethiopia has successfully completed a series of national development plans starting with the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), which lasted for three years (2002/03-2004/05). The second was the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP), which was from 2005/06-2009/10. This plan was built on eight strategic pillars: building all-inclusive implementation capacity; a massive push to accelerate economic growth; creating the balance between economic development and population growth; unleashing the potential of Ethiopia's women; strengthening the infrastructural backbone of the country; strengthening human resource development; managing risk and volatility; and creating employment. Opportunities were identified as was targeting for 'ensuring accelerated, sustained and broad based economic development and preparing the ground for the full achievement of Ethiopia's MDG targets by 2015.<sup>vi</sup> During the PASDEP period an average economic growth of 11 per cent per annum was recorded.

The third and fourth national plans are the Growth and Transformation Plans I and II (GTP I and II) covering 2011-2015 and 2016-2020 respectively. GTP I was built on seven pillars: sustaining rapid and equitable economic growth; maintaining agriculture as the major source of economic growth; creating conditions for industry to play a key role in the economy; enhancing expansion and quality of infrastructure development; enhancing expansion and quality of social development; building capacity and deepening good governance; and promoting gender and youth empowerment and equity. These pillars have been targeted at promoting the country's economic growth in a more sustainable way through addressing adaptation to climate variability and change, as well as contributing to the mitigation efforts of the country.

## Mainstreaming climate change into development planning

Mainstreaming climate change is about setting the foundations for realising a green model of development-economic growth whilst having social inclusion and environmental sustainability. In the Government of Ethiopia's five-year (2016-2020) development plan, the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II),<sup>vii</sup> the country's ambition to build a climate resilient green economy by 2025 is set out. As well as in the GTP II, various national policies, initiatives and sectoral programmes also address climate change, although indirectly. These policy and programme initiatives include: the Environmental Policy, the Energy Policy and the Biofuels Strategy, the Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy, the Water Resources Management Policy, Strategy and Programme, the Health Policy, the Productive Safety Net Program, the Sustainable Land Management Programme, the National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Preparedness, the National Policy on Biodiversity Conservation, The Ethiopian Policy and Strategy on the development, conservation and use of forests, the Pastoral Policy, and the recently introduced National Development Plan for Ethiopian Women, Children and Youth. These policies are meant to expedite Ethiopia's joining the international community in integrating climate change low emission development strategies (LEDS) into economic growth.

When the CRGE was first developed, the GTP I was under implementation and hence integration was not possible. The second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II), the five-year plan for 2016-2020, which is now under implementation, is however integrated with the CRGE. The integration process started first by developing integration guidelines and checklists, with these documents then introduced to sectors and regions. Guidance was also given on effective target setting for the GTP II period. Integration has now happened across sectors and there is no sector left out. All the plans were also reviewed before being endorsed. This planning process is, however, only the first stage of integration. The next steps include: having continued political support and follow up using the natural resource standing committee members of the federal and regional parliamentarians, as well as the inter-ministerial committee; giving technical back up on outstanding issues; providing tools and systems; building capacity across sectors and regions using regional universities and research centres; having better institutional arrangements and coordination among sectors; and also undertaking reviews at different time scales. The CRGE Facility has also now developed manuals and established systems for effective delivery. For instance, the facility is supporting and coordinating the effective realisation of Fast Track Projects (FTP) through funds mobilised from development partners.<sup>viii</sup> The realisation of the FTPs is an important lesson learning process that will be used as input during the Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) period.

## Creating a Climate Resilient and Green Economy

As outlined in Paper 1, Ethiopia 's overarching framework and national strategy, the Climate Resilient Green Economy (CRGE), launched in 2011, was a very ambitious strategy aimed at reaching net zero and middle- income status by 2025.<sup>x</sup> This low emission, rather than carbon-intensive approach, is believed to have significant sustainability co-benefits and detailed sectoral adaptation strategies have been produced.

The green economy (GE) part of the CRGE addresses the low carbon and sustainable model of economic development. The 2010 estimate of GHG emissions in Ethiopia is 150 Mega tons (Mt) of CO<sub>2</sub>e MtCO<sub>2</sub>e (Million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent) which is about 0.3% of global GHG emissions. Out of the key priority sectors with high emission reduction potential, it has been identified that 50% of emissions are from the agriculture sector with livestock covering 43% and crops 7%. The forestry sector also covers 37%. The remaining share of emissions is covered by power generation, transport, buildings and the industry sectors, with a total of 12%.

With the current rate of economic and population growth, and a business-as-usual (BAU) scenario, Ethiopia's GHG emission has been projected to reach 400 Mt of CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030 from 150 Mt in 2010, unless action that will shift the country towards a green development path becomes integrated within the approach the country is currently following. Hence, there is a need for identifying initiatives which have high emission reduction potential, by about 64%, for Ethiopia to be able to reduce its emissions from 400 Mt to 145 Mt of CO<sub>2</sub>e by 2030. For this purpose four pillars have been identified: Adoption of agricultural and land use efficiency measures; Increased GHG sequestration in forestry, i.e., protecting and re-establishing forests for their economic and ecosystem services including as carbon stocks; Deployment of renewables and clean power generation; and Use of appropriate and advanced technologies in industry, transport and buildings. Initiatives have been prioritised and 60 green initiatives that have high abatement potential have been identified. Realising these initiatives is now underway across the country.<sup>x</sup>

The Climate Resilient (CR) part of the CRGE is being addressed sector by sector. The CRGE vision has already underscored that sustainability of green growth will be achieved if the country is able to build resilience to climate variability and change, for instance flood and drought. Hence there is a need for protecting the economy, minimising the potential negative impacts and maximising potential benefits of climate variability and change. The climate resilient strategy for the agriculture, forestry, water and energy sectors have been developed and integrated as part of the second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II). The remaining sectors are also in the preparatory phase of having sectoral CRs. For instance, the CR of agriculture and forestry sectors has identified that: climate hazards like flood and drought, as well as associated soil erosions, have been affecting the agriculture sector; livelihoods in the sector have been observed to be more vulnerable and the projected impacts are also likely to be very high. Within the CR the identification and prioritisation of 41 key interventions out of a 350 long list has been done, together with their costs.

## Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)

Ethiopia was among the first of the countries to have submitted a very ambitious Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC). The INDC was submitted to the UNFCCC a bit earlier than the deadline and was one way of motivating others to make a similar undertaking. (Ethiopia's INDC has been mentioned as a model for other parties to follow). Ethiopia's INDC envisages limiting its net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in 2030 to 145 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e or lower.<sup>xi</sup> This will result in 64% reduction from the 'business as usual' (BAU) scenario and is equivalent to 255 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e – as discussed above. The mitigation targets were generated from the CRGE strategy and disaggregated into sectoral targets with the required estimated budgets. In order to reduce the vulnerability of the population, the INDC of Ethiopia has also addressed adaptation needs at different time scales. The adaptation initiatives have emanated from the sectoral Climate Resilient strategies already developed.

## Doha Amendment

The Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol was developed in 2012 by Parties to the Kyoto protocol, and establishes the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period for a total of eight years till 2020. The Kyoto Protocol now covers only a small share of global emissions, less than 15%. The Doha amendment will enter into force following acceptance by at least three quarters of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol; hence, it requires a total of 144 instruments of acceptance for its entry into force. As of 3 May 2016, countries that have ratified the Doha Amendment for the establishment of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol have reached only 65.<sup>xii</sup> Its entry into force however is important for maintaining momentum of the on-going negotiations as well as contributing to filling the pre-2020 mitigation gap. Addressing the pre 2020 mitigation gap, associated with the Doha amendment, is crucial to many vulnerable countries like Least Developed Countries (LDC). Recognising its urgency, Ethiopia has undertaken all the requirements in this regard. The LDCs who have been arguing for avoiding the pre-2020 mitigation gap now need to take the leadership role in ratifying the Doha Amendment.

## Establishment of the Ethiopian Panel on Climate Change

The global response to climate change started with the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 as a scientific body supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The IPCC has produced a series of five assessment reports across sectors by reviewing and assessing the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide, relevant to the understanding of climate change. These reports have been improved through time. However, there are major limitations in getting sufficient peer reviewed inputs from most of the developing countries, and particularly from Least Developed Countries. There is an urgent need for countries to share inputs that may not be easily available. With this understanding, the Government of Ethiopia has supported the establishment of the Ethiopian Panel on Climate Change (EPCC), a mirror image of IPCC, hosted by the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences.<sup>xiii</sup>

The EPCC avoids duplication of efforts and creates a national knowledge-sharing platform for climate research. It also acts as a platform for creating dialogue and knowledge sharing amongst researchers and policymakers on climate-related issues. It comprises of more than seventy lead authors, authors, reviewers and gender experts from universities, research centres, government offices and individuals that are working in this area. The experts took into consideration peer-reviewed research activities, workshop findings and policy briefs for the preparation of the First Assessment Report (FAR). This report was the first of its kind in having sector wide information that provides rigorous and balanced scientific information to the government, and which follows the reports of the IPCC.

The methodologies and organisational structures that the EPCC follows are similar to what the IPCC has been using. For instance, it consists of technical working groups, sub-technical working groups, and special task forces. The technical working groups are comprised of leading scientists in their respective fields. An inclusive approach, including academia, public, NGOs, and the private sector was applied in selecting contributing scientists. Each technical or sub-technical working group is hosted by a technical support unit (TSU), with most of the TSUs located within the government to ensure government participation and ownership of the EPCC's policy briefs and technical reports. The EPCC is made up of two working groups. The first working group, Physical Science Basis, focuses on the science component of climate related issues. The second working group, which addresses both Adaptation and Mitigation has sub-technical working groups including: Agriculture and Food Security; Water and Energy; Biodiversity and Ecosystem; Health and Settlement; and Industry, Transport and Infrastructure. The gender task force members are also part of the process as authors. The EPCC is an important platform for coordinating climate related research and contributing to science-led policy decisions.

## Main drivers for the creation and implementation of climate change policies

Ethiopia's economy is highly dependent on rain fed agriculture. The frequency of extreme events like floods and droughts is increasing over time, and has resulted in damage to life and property as well as natural resources. For instance, the flood that happened across the country in 2006 claimed 719 lives, forced the evacuation of over 241,699 people and also damaged infrastructure worth millions of USD.<sup>xiv</sup> In addition, the El Nino event that happened this past year resulted in food insecurity, water scarcity and other associated impacts for millions of people. In order to address these challenges the government has now allocated a significant amount of resources that could otherwise have been used for the development efforts that the country is undertaking.

The main drivers for the creation and implementation of climate change policies and strategies, include the following:

### The existing impact of climate variability and change

Based on the evidence collected from different studies and the 'Climate Hearings' (see Paper 1), most communities have experienced the impact of climate variability and change through frequent drought and flood, contributing to food insecurity and other associated impacts. This evidence is among the main reasons for the creation and implementation of Ethiopia's climate change policies and strategies.

During the 'Climate Hearings' local elders talked about substantial decreases in crop production and difficulty of accessing water for agricultural and domestic use; the results of which are causing considerable difficulty, especially for women. Jemila Mero, a farmer and mother of five, gave her testimony on her observations and what needs to be done at the local level. She stated: "*We used to have many streams, but these days most of them have dried out. Now we have to walk long distances to get water making it difficult to take care of our children at home. We need to protect our trees and be more responsible in protecting our natural resources.*"

### Sustainability of development efforts

The economy has been growing and improving for the last ten+ years, and lots of resources have been invested in infrastructure development, improving the living standards of the people through improving services, increasing productivity and so on. These efforts, however, are unlikely to be sustainable without considering and addressing climate change and variability as part of their planning and implementation. For instance, the current El Nino has resulted in significant reduction in agricultural productivity, access to water and associated impacts. In order to address the immediate needs of the affected communities, the government has had to allocate a significant amount of resources that should have been utilised for development purposes. Areas affected by the current drought will also require some time in order to recover from the impact.

### Strong political leadership

The strong political will of the government, which has been illustrated in the climate diplomacy efforts at global and regional level, were first initiated at home. The Ethiopian government has been taking the lead in initiating a strategy to address climate change at the national level and also making the institutional arrangement to serve this purpose. For instance, the creation of the CRGE and its other associated plans, systems and tools, and the establishment of MEFCC and the CRGE facility, shows how the strong political leadership which started at home has become a role model and best practice experience to be shared among countries with similar socio-economic situations.

Among the exemplary efforts the political leadership has shown in climate diplomacy is the active engagement at regional, continental as well as at global levels. For instance, in preparation for COP15,

Ethiopia helped create a common position across the African continent through the *Conference of African Heads of State on Climate Change* in order to give political leadership guidance to the technical negotiators, as well as to enable them to speak with one voice during climate change negotiations.

According to Article 4, paragraph 9, of the Paris Agreement, the least developed countries like Ethiopia and small island developing States may prepare and communicate strategies, plans and actions for low greenhouse gas emissions development reflecting their special circumstances. Ethiopia has taken a leadership role in this via developing and realizing the CRGE since 2011.

Ethiopia's very ambitious Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC), which has been submitted ahead of other countries, is also a demonstration of the government's strong political commitment. The mitigation targets were generated from the CRGE strategy and disaggregated into sectoral targets with the required estimated budgets. The INDC of Ethiopia has also addressed adaptation needs at different time scales. Addressing the pre 2020 mitigation gap by associating the Doha amendment is crucial to most vulnerable countries like Least Developed Countries (LDC). Recognizing its urgency Ethiopia has also done all the requirements in this regard.

## People's dedication

The people's willingness in realising policies that will address climate change and variability is also among the main reasons for Ethiopia's performance in realising the CRGE. For instance, the rural communities have been engaged in free labour natural resource management practices for the last few years. They have been engaged in the rehabilitation of degraded land that has resulted in improved productivity and easier access to water. Overall these efforts have contributed to reducing the impact of the current El Nino. Hence, there is strong national ownership of the existing strategies and Ethiopia's plans for addressing climate variability and change.



## Endnotes

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- <sup>i</sup> Ethiopia's Environmental Policy (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1997)
- <sup>ii</sup> Initial National Communication of Ethiopia to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2001)
- <sup>iii</sup> <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/napa/eth01.pdf>
- <sup>iv</sup> Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions for Ethiopia  
[http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop\\_15/copenhagen\\_accord/application/pdf/ethiopiaphaccord\\_app2.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_15/copenhagen_accord/application/pdf/ethiopiaphaccord_app2.pdf)
- <sup>v</sup> [www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Ethiopia/1/INDC-Ethiopia-100615.pdf](http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Ethiopia/1/INDC-Ethiopia-100615.pdf)
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- <sup>vii</sup> Growth and Transformation Plan (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2013)
- <sup>viii</sup> The CRGE Fast Track Investments <http://www.mofed.gov.et/English/Featured%20Articles/Pages/TheCRGEFastTrackInvestments.aspx>
- <sup>ix</sup> Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy  
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- <sup>x</sup> CRGE Strategy *op cit*
- <sup>xi</sup> INDC of Ethiopia (<http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Published%20Documents/Ethiopia/1/INDC-Ethiopia-100615.pdf>)
- <sup>xii</sup> [http://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol/doha\\_amendment/items/7362.php](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/doha_amendment/items/7362.php)
- <sup>xiii</sup> <http://www.epcc-et.org/>
- <sup>xiv</sup> Ethiopian Panel on Climate Change (2015), First Assessment Report, Summary of Reports for Policy Makers, Published by the Ethiopian Academy of Sciences

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Published by IIED, 22/09/2016

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